

## **ADVS Supports Navajo Veterans Gathering**

**WINDOW ROCK-** Veterans from all over the Navajo Nation gathered in Window Rock on September 25 – 26 for the first of its kind gathering to inform them of the many benefits available from federal, state and tribal governments. An estimated 1700 veterans and their families attended the two day special event.

The Arizona Department of Veterans' Services (ADVS) was well represented by Director Colonel Joey Strickland, Assistant Deputy Director Mike Klier, ADVS Northern Region Supervisor John Dudas and Clifford Qötsaquahu, the Veterans Benefit Counselor from the new ADVS Chinle office. The four of them staffed a table providing information on the services ADVS provides and answering questions from hundreds of veterans. The majority of the questions at the ADVS table were centered on educational benefits and housing.

Representatives from the VA Medical Centers in Prescott and Phoenix, the VA Regional Office, and the VA Cemetery were there to explain federal programs and benefits. Helmets to Hardhats, a national program that connects National Guard, Reserve and transitioning active-duty military members with quality career training and employment opportunities within the construction industry, even had a representative from San Diego.

According to participants, the gathering was a huge success and will become a yearly event. ADVS Director Strickland says that the Arizona Department of Veterans' Service is committed to providing support for all such future programs on the Navajo Nation as well as on other Native American communities throughout Arizona.